



Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 RMP Program and Policy

The Pacific Northwest Region of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is conducting a multi-year program to prepare a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for each of its major facilities. This program is guided by Federal legislation and policies to ensure that Federal lands are managed to serve a wide range of public purposes. RMP preparation is specifically authorized in Title 28 of Public Law 102-575. It is also an outcome of *Assessment '87*, a Reclamation study that examined the future direction of its programs. This study established a broad framework for moving forward into the 21st century, with increased emphasis on the improved management of projects and the protection of the environment. Each RMP is intended to provide the management framework needed to balance the development, use, and protection of Reclamation lands and their associated natural, cultural, and recreational resources. It is Reclamation's blueprint for future resource management decisions to guide Reclamation, managing partners, and agency cooperators, as well as inform the public about the resource management policies and actions to be implemented over the life of the RMP.

Reclamation's resource management policy is to provide a broad level of stewardship to ensure and encourage resource protection, conservation, and multiple use, as appropriate. Management practices and principles established in this RMP, in accordance with exist-

ing Federal laws, regulations, and policies, provide for the protection of fish, wildlife, and other natural resources; cultural resources; public health and safety; and applicable uses of Reclamation lands and water areas, public access, and outdoor recreation.

1.2 Purpose and Scope of the Plan

The Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour Wildlife Management Area (WMA) RMP is a 15-year plan to provide management direction for lands and waters under Reclamation jurisdiction in the vicinity of Black Canyon Reservoir and the Montour WMA. In this document, the entire area is collectively referred to as the "RMP study area." The study area includes Reclamation lands surrounding the reservoir, as well as the Montour WMA, which includes Reclamation lands jointly managed by Reclamation and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG).

In 1984, Reclamation prepared a management plan for the Montour WMA; Reclamation has used this plan in creating the RMP. The purpose of this RMP is to address current and anticipated future issues to permit the orderly and coordinated development and management of lands and facilities and the water surface under Reclamation jurisdiction in the RMP study area. The plan will be used as the basis for directing activities on Reclamation lands and the reservoir in a way that maximizes overall public and resource benefits,

and that provides guidance for managing the area during the next 15 years.

Through implementation of the RMP, Reclamation aims to balance competing and conflicting demands for differing uses and to maximize compatibility with surrounding land uses, while affording an appropriate level of resource protection and enhancement.

Over the course of implementing the RMP, it will be reviewed, reevaluated, and revised (if necessary) in cooperation with all involved agencies and Tribes to reflect changing conditions and management objectives. If a proposed modification to the RMP would significantly affect area resources or public use, opportunities for public involvement will be provided. The RMP will be updated at the end of its 15-year life.

In addition to this introductory chapter, the RMP contains the five main chapters, summarized below.

Chapter 2 summarizes the relevant natural, visual, cultural, and socioeconomic resources around the reservoir. The resource inventory describes existing conditions and lays the framework for identifying suitable resources for a variety of land and water uses, as well as sensitive resources that require special protection, enhancement, or restoration.

Chapter 3 summarizes existing land use and management. The range of existing land uses is described and existing land use agreements identified. These include: Project facilities and general operations (i.e., Black Canyon Dam and Reservoir); agreements, easements and permits; encroachments; public facilities, utilities and services; recreational uses; and access and transportation.

Chapter 4 provides a detailed description of the RMP planning process, including the public involvement program and input received through newsbrief response forms, meet-

ings/workshops, and agency consultation. This chapter also describes Reclamation's efforts regarding its responsibilities to the affected Tribes. All of this information helped identify the range of issues and concerns, establish goals and objectives, identify the range of alternative plans for study, and modify the Preferred Alternative, which became the RMP.

Chapter 5 is the core of the RMP and provides a detailed description of the Goals, Objectives, and Management Actions associated with the plan. The Goals, Objectives, and Management Actions are organized according to the six themes that follow: (1) natural resources; (2) cultural resources; (3) Indian sacred sites; (4) Indian Trust Assets; (5) recreation and access; and (6) land use, management, and implementation.

Chapter 6 presents the implementation program associated with the Management Actions set forth in Chapter 5. This includes a description of program phasing, related actions, priorities, and responsible entities, as well as the process involved with amending and updating the plan.

1.3 Location and Description of the RMP Study Area

Black Canyon Reservoir is located in Gem County, Idaho, approximately 6 miles from the town of Emmett and about 30 miles northwest of the city of Boise (see Figure 1.3-1). Black Canyon Dam impounds the Payette River, and the reservoir is an important recreation resource in the region, both for local residents as well as those from the Boise metropolitan area (see Photo 1-1). The Montour WMA is managed cooperatively with IDFG primarily for wildlife habitat and recreation use (mainly hunting).

As shown in Figure 1.3-1, the RMP study area consists of Reclamation-owned lands sur-



Photo 1-1. Aerial view of Black Canyon Dam, powerplant, and operation facilities, with the reservoir above and Payette River below the dam.

rounding Black Canyon Reservoir. Reclamation's jurisdiction includes the reservoir (1,100 surface acres) and adjacent lands (1,700 acres), as well as the Montour WMA (1,100 acres). Reclamation lands generally consist of a strip of

land around the reservoir with about 12 miles of shoreline. Lands in the vicinity are predominately in agricultural use, and surrounding land ownership includes both Federally managed land (Reclamation and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management [BLM]) as well as private lands, primarily rangeland and rural residences. The Montour WMA is jointly managed by Reclamation and IDFG.

There are four developed day use recreation sites on Reclamation lands at the reservoir and just downstream of the dam: Black Canyon, Wild Rose, Triangle and Cobblestone parks. One 19-site campground is located at the Montour WMA. Primary road access to the RMP study area is provided by State Highway 52.

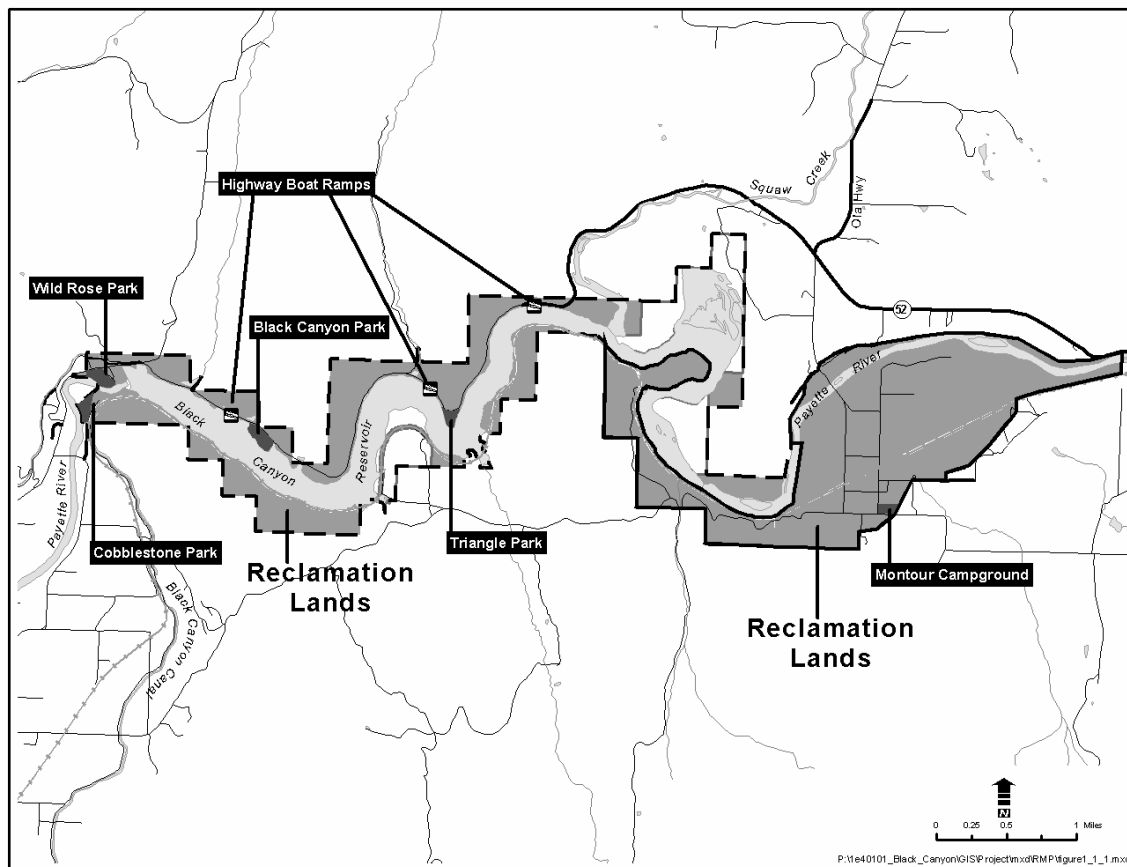


Figure 1.3-1. The RMP study area.

As the region continues to grow, Reclamation expects that more people will use the area. This increasing recreation use, as well as the potential conflicts among recreation, aesthetic, and natural resources, is an important reason for preparing a management plan for the area's resources.

1.4 Project Summary

Black Canyon Dam, which impounds Black Canyon Reservoir in the Payette River drainage, was constructed in 1924 for authorized uses of irrigation and power. Black Canyon Diversion Dam was constructed between 1922 and 1924 as part of the Payette Division of the Boise Project. The project authorization includes irrigation and power, and was primarily constructed as a diversion facility for the Black Canyon Main Canal. A powerplant was added in 1925 that consists of two generator units (see Photo 1-2). The plant supplies power to meet irrigation loads in the Boise, Owyhee, and Minidoka projects as part of Reclamation's Southern Idaho Power System. Surplus power is delivered to the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) for marketing and distribution to regional industries and municipalities.

After completion of the Black Canyon Dam, sediment carried by the Payette River began filling the upper end of Black Canyon Reservoir. In time, this sediment deposition caused water to back up into the Montour area. As the water backup into Montour grew worse, several solutions were considered. In 1976, Reclamation purchased lands within the 100-year floodplain under the Montour Flood Project. Realizing its value for wildlife and public use, Montour Valley was designated by Reclamation as the Montour WMA. In 1983, IDFG and Reclamation entered into a cooperative agreement to manage the WMA.

The dam and reservoir operate under the supervision of Reclamation's Snake River Area

Office (SRAO) Area Manager. The power plant is operated by Reclamation as a run-of-the-river plant (that is, no human-induced water fluctuations), although operational releases are coordinated to maximize power generation. The RMP does not address reservoir operations, since they are based on contractual and other obligations, such as flood control.



Photo 1-2. Black Canyon Dam and adjacent powerplant.

1.5 Overview of Public Involvement, Agency, and Tribal Coordination

Reclamation conducted an extensive public involvement program as part of the RMP planning process to ensure representation and participation by all those interested in the future of Black Canyon Reservoir and Montour WMA. To achieve full representation, the program was designed to reach a user population that was dispersed over a broad geographical area, representing diverse points of view, and enthusiastic in participating in the RMP planning process.

The public involvement program consisted of four primary elements: (1) four newsbriefs mailed to agencies, Tribes, elected officials, organizations, media, and individuals; (2) two public meetings/workshops; (3) four meetings

with a group formed as part of the RMP planning process to represent key stakeholders (including agencies, Tribes, and interest groups in the area); and (4) a public web site providing access to newsbriefs, draft materials, and meeting announcements. These elements, as well as additional agency and Tribal consultation efforts, are discussed in further detail in Chapter 4.

